United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

• Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, recommends that General Assembly appropriate $9 million to finance UNFICYP for period 16 June to 15 December; notes that troop-contributing countries are owed more than $200 million in outstanding reimbursements.

• United Nations Legal Counsel tells Fifth Committee that financing of Yugoslav war crimes Tribunal from United Nations regular budget is an exceptional response to an exceptional situation and not a precedent; stresses that Tribunal is not a peace-keeping operation.

• Eight UNDP employees in Mogadishu detained in cordon-and-search operation by Quick Reaction Force working with UNOSOM II; later released when identity is verified, but spokesman warns that search was intentional and will be followed by more to establish security in city.

• Special Representative for Angola condemns attack by unknown elements on WFP convoy which killed three relief workers; says United Nations intends to identify those responsible and to ensure that aid is not exploited for political purposes.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the General Assembly appropriate some $9 million to finance the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for the period 16 June to 15 December, taking into consideration the receipt of voluntary contributions amounting to $12.5 million. In a report dated 20 August, the Secretary-General recalled that prior to 15 June, UNFICYP had been funded entirely from voluntary contributions. However, the Security Council had decided in resolution 831 (1993) that costs not covered by voluntary contributions should be treated as expenses of the Organization.

The report pointed out that since UNFICYP had been established in 1964, voluntary contributions had never been enough to meet the United Nations' share of the cost. A total of more than $200 million in outstanding reimbursements was now owed to troop-contributing countries.

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United Nations Legal Counsel Carl-August Fleischhauer has told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) that the creation of the International Tribunal to try war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and its financing from the United Nations's regular budget are an "exceptional response to an exceptional situation" and will not set a precedent. The Legal Counsel was responding on Friday to questions from Member States about the Security Council's competence to determine the method of financing for the Tribunal.

Mr. Fleischhauer said the Council's decision to finance the Tribunal through the regular budget rather than as a peace-keeping account was a logical consequence of the nature of the body. Although the Tribunal had been established under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and was a subsidiary body of the Council, it was not a peace-keeping operation and bore no resemblance to such an operation. Since it would function as a normal, civilian, criminal court, independent of political considerations, it did not fall into the category of a peace-keeping operation, he said.

Several representatives took issue with the Council's decision on the question of the Tribunal's financing. The representative of India said the Tribunal's Statute should have established its financing in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter, which vests that responsibility with the General Assembly. The representative of Colombia said that the Council should merely have presented proposals or recommendations on financing, without taking a final decision. The representative of Zimbabwe said that the Council's decision violated the Charter and that the Tribunal should be treated as if it were a peace-keeping operation.

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Eight employees of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in south Mogadishu were detained this morning in a cordon-and-search operation carried out by the members of the Quick Reaction Force operating as part of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). According to a United Nations spokesman, the UNDP staff members were later released after their identity had been verified, but there had been no mistake in searching the buildings and a number of small arms had been confiscated during the operation.

United Nations employees in Mogadishu were housed in an approved area patrolled by UNOSOM II soldiers so as to ensure their safety, the spokesman said. The workers detained today had been living outside of that area, and had been in jeopardy from the militia of Somali warlord General Mohamed Farah Aideed, and "potentially from UNOSOM operations".

The spokesman stressed that there would be further operations aimed at re-establishing security in Mogadishu, in order to facilitate the levels of disarmament and reconciliation that had been achieved elsewhere in Somalia.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, has condemned an attack last Thursday on a World Food Programme (WFP) convoy carrying aid to Caimbambo and Cubal, in which three personnel were killed and three trucks and their cargoes were destroyed. The attack was carried out by unknown elements in an area under the control of the Angolan Government, but where occasional incursions by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) had been reported.

The Special Representative said the United Nations had taken measures to identify those responsible for the attack and to ensure that humanitarian assistance was not exploited for political or military purposes. He also urged all Angolans to join in the efforts of the international community to assist the needy population.

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